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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please revise the claims, as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A system for preventing theft of an object, ~~said, system~~ said system comprising:
- an electronic article surveillance (EAS) device operatively attached to an object;
 - a security path for detection of said EAS device, said security path including at least one security gate;
 - a reader operatively coupled to said security path and associated with one of said at least one security gate;
 - a smart card for being read by said reader, said smart card containing an identification profile of an authorized user of said object; and
 - a computer attached to said reader, said computer disabling a security function of said security path at said security gate if a person ~~presenting, said~~ presenting said smart card at said reader is determined as being authorized to remove said object after having said smart card read by said reader; and
 - an alarm operatively coupled to said security path,
- wherein upon passage through said path without first having established that said person is authorized to remove said object, said EAS device triggers the path to activate said alarm and subsequently, when said smart card is read by said reader and said person is determined as being authorized to remove said object, said alarm is turned off.

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2. (Original) The system according to claim 1, wherein said EAS device comprises an acousto-magnetic tag.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) The system according to claim 1, wherein said EAS device comprises a radio frequency (RF) tag.

5. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein said gate is for interrogating said EAS device, said gate including said reader being one of built integrally thereto and in a proximity thereof.

6. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein said computer contains a database including information regarding said authorized user of said object.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 1, further comprising a video receiver operatively coupled to said path, said path activating said video receiver upon interrogating said EAS device.

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9. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 28 1, wherein either said alarm is turned off or an authorized user is allowed free passage through said path, when said smart card is presented to said reader.

10. (Original) The system according to claim 1, further comprising a storage device, coupled to said reader, containing information on personnel authorized to enter through or exit through said path with said object.

11. (Original) The system according to claim 6, wherein said computer logs a time and user identity related to passage through said path.

12. (Original) The system according to claim 1, wherein said smart card comprises a direct contact smart card.

13. (Original) The system according to claim 1, wherein said smart card comprises a contactless smart card.

14. (Original) The system according to claim 1, wherein said smart card comprises a magnetic strip containing a code.

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15. (Currently amended) A method for preventing theft of an object, said method comprising:

operatively attaching an electronic article surveillance (EAS) device to an object;

detecting said EAS device as said object traverses a security path;

operatively coupling a reader to said security path, said reader associated with a security gate in said security path;

reading, by said reader, a smart card being presented to said reader as said object traverses said security path, said smart card containing an identification profile of an authorized user of said object; and

attaching a computer to said reader, said computer disabling a security function of said security path at said security gate if said smart card is determined as being associated with a person authorized to remove said object;

operatively coupling an alarm to said security path;

activating said alarm upon passage through said path without first having established that said person is authorized to remove said object; and

turning off said alarm when said smart card is read by said reader and said person is determined as being authorized to remove said object.

16. (Original) The method according to claim 15, wherein said EAS device comprises an acousto-magnetic tag.

17. (Canceled)

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18. (Original) The method according to claim 15, wherein said EAS device comprises a radio frequency (RF) tag.

19. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein said security gate is for interrogating said EAS device, said gate including said reader being one of built integrally thereto and in a proximity thereof.

20. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 15, further comprising:

providing said computer with a database including information regarding said authorized user of said object.

21. (Previously presented) A system for preventing theft of an object, said system comprising:

an electronic article surveillance (EAS) device operatively attached to an object;

a security path for detection of said EAS device;

a reader operatively coupled to said security path, said reader located at or near a security gate of said security path;

a smart card for being read by said reader, said smart card containing an identification profile of an authorized user of said object;

a computer attached to said reader, said computer disabling a security function at said security gate if said smart card is determined to be that of a person authorized to remove said object; and

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operatively coupling an alarm to said security path,

wherein upon passage through said path without first having established that said person is authorized to remove said object, said EAS device triggers the path to activate said alarm and subsequently, when said smart card is read by said reader and said person is determined as being authorized to remove said object, said security function at said security gate is disabled by said computer, and

wherein said EAS device continuously outputs a signal to said security path.

22. (Currently amended) The system according to claim ~~21~~ wherein 21, wherein the identification profile is obtained independently of said signal.

23. (Currently amended) The system according to claim ~~21~~ wherein 21, wherein said computer opens said security gate when said smart card is determined to include the identification profile of the authorized user of said object.

24. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 21, wherein said computer turns off said alarm when said smart card includes the identification profile of the authorized user of said object.

25. (Previously presented) The system according to claim ~~28~~ 1, further comprising:
a video camera,

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wherein a video image is captured each time said alarm is actuated.

26. (Currently amended) The system according to claim ~~28~~ 1, further comprising:

a video camera,

wherein a video image is captured each time said alarm is turned off.

27. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a video camera,

wherein a video image is captured when said smart card includes the identification profile
of the authorized user of said object.

28-29. (Canceled)